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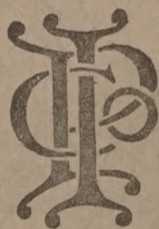
J. C. PICKARD.

NOÉMI,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MME.

DE GIRARDIN, BY

LUCY WHEELLOCK.



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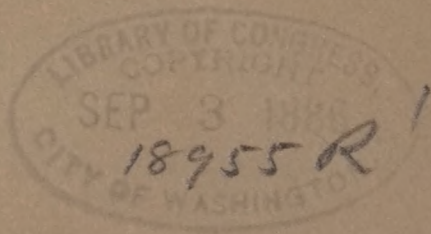
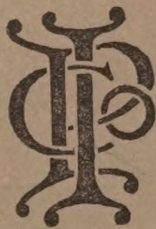
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THE STORY OF SOLDIER FRITZ.

THE STORY OF SOLDIER FRITZ.

CHAPTER I.

SOLDIER FRITZ was the name of a bright, active boy, the son of a corporal in the Prussian service. He was so named because, in the first place, his father was a soldier ; in the second place, because he was always fond of playing soldier ; and in the third place, because Fritz was his Christian name.

Soldier Fritz was known throughout the city of Brandenburg, and he was not offended when he was called by that name ; it flattered him rather, because he was through and through a real soldier boy.

When he had reached the age of thirteen a war broke out with France, and the Prussian regiments were obliged to march to the Rhine, even the very regiment in which Soldier Fritz's father was a corporal. The father took leave

of wife and son, admonished his boy to be well-behaved, industrious, and orderly during his absence, and then marched off bag and baggage.

Half a year passed, and the family of our corporal, which had been left behind, had heard not so much as a word from him. At last a letter came, one morning, and brought only good news — among other things, the information that the corporal had meanwhile risen to the rank of sergeant.

“But of what use is all that to me?” was written in the letter. “One does not get satisfied with honor alone, and we scarcely find anything else to eat. If I but had one peck of our fine potatoes! They would taste good! Here on the Rhine we are often forced to hunger three days together, so that our skin cracks; and not one honest potato has come to my sight since I left home.”

Soldier Fritz caught up this passage in the letter. It vexed and annoyed him that his father had no good potatoes, and was obliged to go hungry, while at home the cellar was filled from top to bottom with the finest potatoes, and he racked his brains to find a way in which he

could make his father glad, and provide him with a mouthful of good potatoes.

“Mother,” said he, “give me a sack, and I will carry a peck or two to father.”

“My boy, you are not in your right mind,” the mother answered, smiling. “Do you think it a joke to travel a hundred miles, a potato-sack on your shoulder? Put it out of your thought, silly little boy!”

That was easily said, but not so easily obeyed. Soldier Fritz could not get the potatoes out of his mind. Whenever he was walking or standing still, he kept on thinking of his father, how he looked toward home with longing, and wished for only one single peck of the fine potatoes. Even at night this thought would not let him rest, and often he started up out of sleep, crying aloud, “Father, you must have your potatoes!”

CHAPTER II.

A FEW weeks passed thus, and the mother wondered at the foolish boy, who was growing really pale and thin because of those potatoes. Still, she believed that with time he would get the whim out of his head. One morning, however, — it was in the latter part of summer, and the sun had scarcely risen, — she went into Soldier Fritz's garret to waken the boy, and lo! the bed stood empty, and he had disappeared.

“Ah! where can the little rascal be?” muttered the mother. “He has surely gone again to the forest of firs to catch squirrels. I must, indeed, hold him a little closer; for since his father has been gone, obedience and training are lost every day.”

Without looking around further for the little rogue, she went to her work, prepared the frugal mid-day meal, put it on the table, and thought Fritz must now come certainly, for he had not neglected the hour for eating during all the days of his life. But the clock struck

twelve, — struck one, two, and — the boy did not come.

Then the mother got frightened, and ran out and asked her neighbors whether they had happened to see Fritz. No one knew anything of him, till, at last, an old road-repairer remembered that he had seen the boy with a sack on his shoulder in the morning, before sunrise.

“Oh, the little rascal!” exclaimed the mother, and for astonishment she struck her hands together above her head. “He has gone to his father, and is carrying potatoes to his camp for him! Ah! what a fine piece of work this is!”

She ran to her house, looked into his bureau, and found that Fritz’s Sunday clothes were missing, and also a small sack, which he had begged of her a few days before.

“He is really gone!” She sighed, and tears ran from her eyes. “Now, what tricks the boy plays! God keep and protect him! If he only gets there safely, I will say no more; but to run away without any good-by — that is, indeed, too hard!”

The poor mother wept as if her heart were broken, and not till the thought came to her

mind of how the father would rejoice over the boy, could she assuage her grief at all. Since, moreover, she knew not the way or means of overtaking the little rogue, she submitted at last patiently to her fate, and trusted God, that He would reward the clinging love of the boy for his father by a good issue of his plans.

CHAPTER III.

MEANWHILE, Soldier Fritz ran glad and gay in his Sunday clothes toward the Rhine. He did not know exactly the way thither, but the general direction was known to him, because he had asked his schoolmaster about it, and so he supposed he could in no way fail to come to the desired end of his journey.

He had no money, and did not suppose it necessary to have any. "When I arrive," thought he to himself, "people will surely give me a slice of bread. I have only to say I wish to go to my father, to carry him potatoes; that will surely seem right to everybody. And how my father will rejoice when I get to him! Oh,

that will be a jubilee! Haven't I picked out, though, the very finest potatoes in the whole cellar!"

At mid-day, just when his mother was watching for him at home, he reached a large village, turned into the first good inn, boldly seated himself on the wooden bench at the table, and wiped off the sweat.

There were quite a number of guests in the spacious room,—including an old invalid, with a wooden leg, who looked with surprise upon the healthy boy with the sack. The landlord came to him, and asked him who he was, where he came from, and where he wished to go.

"Oh, I am Soldier Fritz from Brandenburg," said the boy, "and I wish to go to the Rhine, to my father, to carry him some potatoes, because he has wanted them so much."

"What do you mean, boy?" said the invalid, standing up and striding to Fritz, and measuring him from head to foot with an astonished look.

"Well, I wish to go to the Rhine," answered Soldier Fritz. "My father has been made a sergeant, but he does not care for that, because

he has no potatoes, and so I will carry him some, and I have picked the finest for him. Here they are in the sack."

"Why, you strange boy!" cried the invalid, as he stroked his long, white mustache. "Say, you little rascal, whether you are really in earnest; and just tell your story properly, so that an intelligent man can understand it."

Soldier Fritz told his story, and all who were in the house listened to him very attentively. When he had finished his story, tears were really standing in the eyes of the old invalid, and all the others wiped their cheeks.

"Why, you rogue," cried the old soldier, "come here and give me a kiss. You are to me a real, genuine soldier boy, and my old heart trembles with joy as I look upon you; come here, I say!"

Soldier Fritz hardly knew what happened to him, for, all of a sudden, the old invalid laid hold of him by the hair of his head, and kissed him heartily till he was nearly out of breath. The other guests did just so, too, in turn, and even the stout host was moved to his inmost soul.

For that day, Fritz was not allowed to think of continuing his journey. He had to stay in the hotel, and he was fondled and caressed as if he were a real prince. In the evening, when still more guests had come in, he told his story once more, at the request of the old soldier. He was at last led by the host into a little chamber, and put into a little white bed, where he slept sweetly, like the angels in heaven.

While Fritz was lying in sweet sleep, and was dreaming of his father, the old invalid made a speech to the guests in the hotel. He thought it would be a sin and a shame if they should let so brave a lad go on his journey without money for the way, and he made the whole thing so plain to the people that every one opened his purse and gave him a plentiful gift for the brave Fritz. The stout landlord collected the money, and kept it in his bureau till morning.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the morning, early, the landlord had his wagon hitched up, waked the boy, set before him a bountiful breakfast, gave him the money which the guests had contributed for him, sewed it into the lining of his jacket, and then dismissed him, with hearty wishes for his welfare and for a fortunate journey. Moved to the heart by the love and kindness of the good man, Soldier Fritz took leave of him and of the invalid soldier, who did not leave his side until the very last minute. He got into the wagon and rode merrily to the nearest city, which was five miles from the village, and to which the friendly landlord had him carried. Here he commissioned the driver to take his kindest greetings to the landlord, and then he continued on his pilgrimage afoot, until evening came on, when he was obliged once more to pass a night in a village. Here, as before, he told his story, and was again kindly cared for, and treated with love and tenderness.

At last, after many a long day of travel, he saw, standing in the distance, the first sentinel of the Prussian camp, and he hastened up to him with flying feet.

“Do you not know where I can find my father?” he asked the soldier, before he got his breath.

“Stupid boy!” the bearded sentinel harshly answered, “do you suppose I know what your father’s name is, and to what regiment he belongs?”

“Oh! he belongs to the Brandenburg Regiment of Grenadiers; and Martin Bollermann is his name; and he is a sergeant,” Soldier Fritz quickly replied.

“Well, if that is true, then hunt him up,” said the sentinel. “You can pass.”

Fritz ran on, came to the second sentinel, to the third, and fell, at length, into the hands of an adjutant, who subjected him to a strict examination. The more he asked, however, and the more he heard, the more friendly he grew, and at length kindly patted the noble boy on his cheek.

“Come with me,” said he. “I think we shall soon be able to find your father.”

He led the way at once to a large, magnificent tent, from the top of which floated a broad banner. Fritz, with his potato-sack, trudged along by his side, and fearlessly followed into the tent, as the officer motioned to him to accompany him boldly.

In the tent he saw an elderly man, magnificently dressed, who was sitting in an arm-chair, before a camp-table, and who seemed to be studying a field map.

He scarcely looked up, and only nodded his head a very little when the companion of our Soldier Fritz respectfully approached him.

"Surely that's a general," thought Fritz, while he, a little abashed, stood at the entrance of the tent. And he was right.

His companion, who was the adjutant of the general, spoke in a low tone to the latter, who very soon turned his eyes from the map, seemed to listen attentively to the adjutant's story, and now and then cast a quick glance upon Soldier Fritz. He continued a short time in conversation with the officer, then gave him an order, and sent him away. Then he beckoned the boy to his side, who at once obeyed the call,

and with soldierly bearing stepped to the general.

“What is your name?” the general asked, after having looked at him long from head to foot.

“Fritz Bollermann, and called Soldier Fritz.”

The general smiled, and asked again:—

“Where do you come from?”

“From Brandenburg.”

“Why have you come here?”

“To bring potatoes to my father.”

“It is, then, really true,” said the general to himself. “Have you them there in the bag?” he added aloud.

“Yes; the best from our cellar,” replied Fritz, as he took the bag from his shoulder, and opened it. “Just look, sir; all of them round and smooth as pebbles!”

“Well, well, my son,” answered the general, “they are, indeed, very fine, and really give me an appetite. But go now into yonder room and stay there till I call you. Do you hear? You can let your sack remain here meanwhile.”

Soldier Fritz laid the potato-bag upon the ground, glided into the room pointed out, and

seated himself in a large arm-chair, which appeared to him uncommonly comfortable and easy. Wearied by the hard march of the day, and still more, perhaps, by his emotions, he was soon nodding, and at last was fast asleep. Thus the general found him when he came into the room, about half an hour later. He let the boy sleep on in peace, and returned to his own room.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE Fritz was forgetful of everything, in the refreshing embrace of sleep, the general was busy in his behalf, and did not rest till he had found the old sergeant, Martin Bollermann, of the Brandenburg Regiment. He at once had him ordered to supper, invited several of his highest officers to come also, and did not fail to give necessary instructions to his cook.

In those days, people took supper earlier than they do now. The guests assembled early, and seated themselves at the table. Some were astonished to find a mere sergeant, and in a ser-

geant's uniform, at the general's table. But Sergeant Bollermann himself was the most surprised.

The strangest thing at the general's table, except the sergeant, was a large, covered dish, which the guests supposed to hold something extremely rare and dainty, as they cast many a longing look upon it. The general noted well the curiosity which was aroused by the dish, but he did not give the slightest hint to gratify that curiosity. He smiled when he looked at the dish, and exchanged occasionally a short, significant glance with his adjutant, of which, however, no one could understand the meaning, except just the two who knew the secret. The curiosity of the guests was strained to the highest degree.

Finally the general called aloud on the sergeant to remove the cover, and, as if at command, all eyes turned at once to that mysterious dish. What did they see? Potatoes in the skin, which surely seemed fine and tempting to the appetite, but yet disappointed not a little the pampered taste of the dainty guests, who had looked for something entirely different.

The only one who heartily rejoiced at the sight was Sergeant Bollermann, and he could scarcely restrain a cry of the most delighted surprise.

"Hitherto, gentlemen," the general said, as a smile played about his lips, "hitherto, you have been my guests, but now, that is, if you choose to enjoy the taste of these magnificent potatoes, you must turn to Sergeant Bollermann. They are his."

The officers haughtily shrugged their shoulders. The general appeared to trouble himself but little about their marked signs of displeasure.

"If you but knew in what way the potatoes came into our camp," he went on to say, "you would count it an honor to get only one of them."

"How so? How was it?" the officers asked. "Tell us, if you please!"

"I? Oh, no! I am a poor hand at fine stories," the general replied. "Yet, as I see that you, as well as our worthy Bollermann, are tormented somewhat by curiosity, I will seek to gratify your wish in some other way. Adjutant, please call in my story-teller."

The adjutant disappeared in the next room, and all eyes were fastened on the doorway.

The heart of worthy old Bollermann thumped to bursting, for a faint suspicion of the truth began to dawn in his soul. He was now white, and now red, and he did not observe how persistently the general's eyes rested on him, with strained expression.

After a short time, the curtain which separated the chamber from the sitting-room was drawn, and in came, at the side of the adjutant, happy Soldier Fritz, looking around with bright and fearless eyes.

"Fritz!" exclaimed the sergeant, forgetting all respect for his superior officers, and springing up with wide-extended arms. "Fritz, how, in Heaven's name, came you here?"

The boy made no reply, but rushed with a loud cry to his father's breast, and both held each other in a long and firm embrace. The officers gazed in deep emotion on that strange sight, and in the eye of the General, who was a dear, good man, glistened a tear of sympathy and joy. His kind way of speaking parted the father and the son at last, and

established once more the peace of their excited minds.

“Tell, my boy, why and how you came here,” he said; “but first be at your ease, and sit with us at the table. You need not refuse to do so, even if it were a king’s table. Your true filial love has well earned the honor.”

Fritz looked affectionately at the General, kissed his father’s hand, seated himself beside him, and went on to tell what we already know. The officers were all eager to hear, and their stern faces grew more and more kindly, and their gloomy eyes grew brighter and brighter. They really found pleasure in the fresh, cheerful boy who loved his father so heartily and deeply that he had travelled a hundred miles and more to bring that father a favorite dish.

The old sergeant, however, appeared wholly overcome in joy and excitement, and he laughed and wept by turns.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Fritz had ended his tale, the father seemed to have forgotten the distinguished company. He embraced, again and again, his courageous son, pressed a hundred kisses upon his round, ruddy mouth, addressed to him thousands and thousands of questions, all of which Fritz answered honestly and frankly.

At a hint of the General's, all present went out of the tent and left the delighted father with his dear boy. Not till after the lapse of an hour did the General return, and place a large writing in one hand of the worthy old sergeant and a great purse full of gold pieces in the other.

“Here is your discharge, my friend, with the assurance of your full support, by a life-long pension; and there is a small present for your good boy, which we officers have collected for him. Keep it till he is grown, and can make good use of it. And now you may go home

to wife and family, who will, indeed, rejoice when they see once more the father of the family."

"Oh, God! General, your grace is too good," stammered the delighted sergeant, who did not know at what to rejoice the most, — the condescension of the high officer, or the pension, or the wealth of his Soldier Fritz. "How have I deserved so great favor?"

"By your brave conduct during the whole campaign; by the wound which you received in consequence of your bravery in the last battle, and which unfits you for service during the rest of your life; and lastly, by your son, Soldier Fritz. In him, I have seen that you must be a good father, and such a one our king can use better at home than in the campaign, which is already near its end. Go in peace, old comrade, and, with God's help, train all your boys as that one there, who is a real soldier-child. Farewell, and do not forget to send Fritz to my regiment as soon as he is large enough to be able to bear arms for his king."

Deeply moved, the old sergeant kissed the General's hand, and returned thanks, from the

bottom of his heart, for the favor that fell to his lot.

The distinguished officer kindly stroked the cheeks of Soldier Fritz, and kissed his forehead.

“Continue good and brave,” said he, “and you will certainly become an upright man; whoever honors father and mother, him God loves, and it shall go well with him on earth. Adieu, my ruddy-cheeked boy!”

Then father and son were sent away. The next day they started forth, and did not allow themselves rest or repose until they reached their cottage home.

That was a feast, indeed, when Soldier Fritz returned, and his father with him! It was a jubilee which cannot be described. The mother wept for joy. The children who had stayed at home, shouted and danced. The father had enough to do to mete out to each his due share of tenderness and caressing, and Fritz was praised in presence of all. Fritz, however, stood by with glistening eyes, and it was easy to see that he did not believe he had deserved all the praise.

When Soldier Fritz was grown he did nothing to bring disgrace upon his name.

He devoted himself wholly to military life, and became a brave officer. He took part in several campaigns, and by his bravery rose from grade to grade, and he is now a very highly honored and a greatly beloved colonel in the service of his native country.

NOÉMI.

NOÉMI.

IN an old city of France, at the end of an old street, in an old house, there was once an old woman, who had charge of a little girl. The poor child stood in great fear of her grandmother, who had such a bad temper that every one ran away from her. She was not like the grandmamas of our time, who pet their grandchildren, take them to walk, and give them candy and playthings.

This grandmother was cross and ill. She always stayed in a dark room, and had an old servant to wait upon her, who was so deaf that she could not hear it thunder. Living in this lonely way, poor Noémi was so timid that she was afraid to breathe.

She had never seen the green grass in the fields, and hardly the blue sky, for the old lady could not bear to have the blinds opened. Noémi had never seen any pretty things. She

had never worn a pair of red shoes or a pink dress. She wore an old figured gown which belonged to her great-grandmother. As for playthings, she did not even know what they were. She had learned to read very young and very quickly, as there was nobody to disturb her lessons.

Her grandmother could not bear the least noise, so the old priest who taught her to read spoke the words in her ear and she spelled them in a whisper. When she could read easily, she did not wish to do anything else. She began to read as soon as it was light. She could not understand all that she read, for she had seen so little; but it was a pleasure to know that there were other things in life than this ugly house and the dismal things about her.

Sometimes she ventured a question. She would ask the servant what a leopard was, a crocodile, or a gazelle; but the woman, not hearing, always replied, "Be quiet, miss." She used these words so often that Noémi did not know what they really meant. She thought they must mean the same as *stop*; so, when the ser-

vant would sometimes cry suddenly at the table, "Be quiet, miss," imagining that Noémi had spoken, the poor child would put down her spoon, thinking that she was forbidden to eat any more.

Noémi's father had gone to the war. That was why she was left with her grandmother. When her father heard that she had learned to read in two weeks, he sent her some beautiful books as a reward. He chose such as had pleased him in his childhood, — "Bluebeard," "Tom Thumb," the "Fables of La Fontaine," and many others.

This present made Noémi very happy, and she spent hours in looking at the pictures. There were many which she did not understand, and animals which she did not know at all. The donkey, for example, seemed to her the most terrible of animals, with its long ears; while the tiger appeared to be a pretty little creature, and the lion a good-natured, clumsy fellow. She thought the pigeon had a wicked air, and the butterfly, with its large wings, its great eyes, and long antennæ, frightened her. When she had studied the pictures of the ani-

mals, she read the tales about them, and as nobody took any pains to correct her wrong impressions, things were sadly mixed in her mind.

Ogres, rats that invite each other to dine, dogs and wolves that talk together, boots which stride seven leagues at a step — all these things were real to her. The wolf in Red Riding-hood seemed very possible to her.

But, at last, the war ended, and Noémi's father came back. As soon as he reached the inn, he ran to see his little daughter. But the old servant, who had heard of his return, was so impatient to be rid of the child that she took her at once to another inn, where she supposed the captain to be. She was told that Noémi's father had just gone out, but would soon return; so she left the child, and hastened back to her mistress.

The landlady promised to take care of the child; but she had her dinner to look after, and Noémi was left to herself, for the first time in her life. She was in the lower hall, near the garden door.

She saw some flowers in the garden, nasturtiums and poppies. She admired them for

some time in silent wonder; then she bounded over the threshold and was in the garden. Her heart beat fast with joy. She jumped, she ran, she did not know what she did. Everything seemed so beautiful to her, and the sky so high!

She soon grew familiar with all the strange objects. She had read astonishing descriptions of them; but she made queer mistakes in trying to name them. She wished to gather a little bell flower which was creeping over a gooseberry bush. The thorns of the gooseberry pricked her. Instead of crying, she smiled, and said, "Oh! I know that! I remember — thorns! It is a rose!" A dog was warming himself in the sun near her. Noémi turned pale with fear when she saw him.

It was a great shepherd dog, and, at first, she supposed it to be a wolf; but then she remembered that wolves live in forests, and very seldom come into villages.

The great dog seemed so gentle that Noémi tried to talk with it, without knowing exactly what it was.

"Who are you?" she asked, in a soft voice. "What is your name?"

Like all dogs, it replied with a bark: "Honap! Honap!"

"Honap!" repeated Noémi. "That is not a pretty name. My name is Noémi."

The dog raised its head, but made no remarks on the name. "Will you come with me?" said the child, taking a few steps in the garden.

The dog ran after her, and she was sure that he had understood her. She ran for some time, but as the dog persisted in catching hold of her gown with his teeth, she was frightened and stopped.

The dog went off and found a bone that he had hidden in the morning. He gnawed it without paying any attention to Noémi, who continued to talk.

"Will you go into the house with me," she asked.

The dog made no sign, and she raised her voice.

"Will you come with me? Say yes or no."

The dog did not stir. Noémi, who was excited by her liberty, lost her patience and wished to punish this obstinacy. "Ah, you do not wish to speak!" she cried. "I will make

you!" And the child, but yesterday so timid, got a stick and began to beat the poor animal.

A servant, who was hanging out clothes, came to the rescue. "Why do you beat our dog?" she cried.

"Because he will not answer," said Noémi.

"Answer," said the servant, laughing. "Is the child foolish? She thinks that dogs talk. The silly thing!"

Noémi, seeing that she was laughed at, went off in bad humor, and was going into the house, when the sight which met her eyes made her draw back.

Through the dining-room window she saw some great creatures, such as she had no idea of. They were of enormous size, and their heads and breasts were covered with leather. Noémi, in a fright, ran to hide under the stairway behind the fountain, where she could hear all they said.

Their voices were so terrible that she trembled at every word. She tried to remember if she had ever read a description of any such beings. A word which the servant dropped gave her some light.

“Really,” said the maid, “I don’t know how I am to satisfy all those ogres.”

Noémi shuddered. “They are ogres,” she thought. “What will become of me?”

You would not have said that, my children. You would have said, “There are some fine soldiers,” — which they were, in truth.

One of them came out of the dining-room and said, “I smell fresh meat,” — at which words Noémi drew farther behind the fountain, not doubting that the ogre would look for her. However, he went back into the dining-room, and she listened to the talk at the table. At last the street door opened and another ogre came in, who asked the landlady if she had seen a little girl with her nurse. They told him that the little girl had gone into the yard. As this ogre seemed to be uneasy, all the others began to run about to look for the little girl. In vain, Noémi pressed close against the stone; one corner of her dress would show.

“Here she is! Here she is!” called the ugliest of the ogres, seizing Noémi, who tried to get away. “Help, comrades; the enemy is trying to flee!”

Then, as Noémi still struggled, he said: "Why do you behave so, miss? Are you not afraid that you will be eaten up?" These words confirmed the child in her mistake.

"Not to-day, perhaps, — you have just dined; but to-morrow" — she could not finish. Sobs choked her. Then the soldier burst out in a laugh, which brought everybody to him.

"Captain," said he, "your daughter takes us for ogres."

Noémi's father ran to her, and greeted her so tenderly that she was soon reassured. He was so kind that it was not possible that he could be an ogre.

After this, Noémi travelled for some time with her father, and was then put in a boarding-school. Everywhere she was laughed at for her credulity, and ended by losing it altogether. She began to doubt everything, even the most evident truths, and this new course led her into numberless dangers and difficulties. At first, people laughed at this as they had laughed at her simple faith in things impossible.

"Plant a cherry-stone," somebody would say to her, "and a cherry-tree will grow up from it," or : —

“Shut up this caterpillar in a box, and you will have a beautiful butterfly.”

Noémi would shrug her shoulders, and say:—

“You are making fun of me! I don’t believe in any of those stories.”

If a grown person said to her, “When you are as large as I am, you will do such and such things,” she would reply: “I large! Oh! I know very well that I shall always be small. How could it be possible that I could grow?”

One day some masons had come to repair a garden wall, and they had filled a hollow in the ground with lime.

“Take care,” one of them said to Noémi, who was watering some flowers near by; “do not pour any water on this lime, or you will burn yourself.”

“But it is cold water,” she said, laughing; “how could I burn myself with cold water?”

Thinking that they were making fun of her, she began to sprinkle the lime from her watering-pot.

Soon she uttered a terrible cry, for she was

cruelly burned. But this did not cure her. It is a sad truth, my children, that the only way to correct our failings is through the trouble which comes from them. We must suffer bitterly for our faults, to know and avoid them. This is what you will learn from the story of Noémi.

After a time, her father took her to Normandy, to live in a castle on the seashore, which he had inherited. She was forbidden to play on the beach at high tide. "You do not know how to swim," said her father. "If you should fall into the water, what would become of you?"

"I should become a fish," she said, carelessly.

Her father smiled at this reply; but he was none the less alarmed. One day, when he was gone, Noémi went to find a little peasant-boy with whom she often played.

"I saw some beautiful shells in the sand, yesterday," she said. "Take a basket and come to get some."

"I would like to," said the boy, "but you will not stay till the tide comes in, will you?"

They ran to the beach and played for an hour, filling the basket with shells.

“Let us return to the castle,” said the boy.
“It is late, and the tide is coming in.”

“I am tired of hearing about your tide,” said Noémi, angrily. “What is it, pray?”

“It is, as you see, the time when the sea comes up on the sand; it rises and rises, as far as this rock, so that any one who remained here would be drowned. But afterward it goes away, it draws back to where it is now, and every day it is the same.

Noémi began to laugh at this explanation.

“You believe in this nonsense!” she said.

“Nothing is more true.”

“Have you seen it?”

“Mamma has told me, and she takes me away every day before the water rises.”

“She tells you that to keep you from playing on the beach, because she is afraid that you will fall into the water. These stories are made up for little children, but we are not obliged to believe in them.”

“But it is very well known in the country, the tide —”

“Come, don’t believe in all these foolish tales. If you knew how they imposed on me when I

was little! I believed in all sorts of follies. I was afraid of being eaten by ogres, of being changed into a cat; when I was angry, I always feared I should see toads and snakes come out of my mouth. I believed —”

“Oh, miss!” interrupted the boy, alarmed, “do look!”

Noémi, on her knees, picking up shells, had her back to the sea. “Let me alone,” she said; “you are a coward. I will not play with you any more.”

As she turned her head to say these words, she heard a strange noise on the stones. What was her terror to see that the sea had already come almost to her feet!

Her basket of shells was covered by the waves, which rolled in with frightful rapidity.

“Run, run!” called the boy. “You see that mamma was right.”

The two children began to run with all the swiftness of fear, but they could not go as fast as the sea which pursued them. Their feet sank in the wet sand; the water drenched their clothes, and made them cling about them so that they could not run so easily.

Tired out, Noémi made a false step and fell. The boy, who was ahead of her, ran back to aid her. And then, instead of running on ahead, he ran more slowly, to assist her. He did not wish to leave her in peril, and save himself, as he could easily do.

Soon all their efforts became useless; the waves advanced with terrible rapidity. They were no longer walking in the sand, but in the water, and the surf was so strong that they could not struggle against it.

“Help! help!” they cried; but nobody responded.

At last, an old sailor perceived them, and resolved to save them, at the risk of his own life.

He ran to them, leaping like a young man from rock to rock.

He reached Noémi just at the moment when her strength gave out and she fell back in the water. He rescued her first. When he had placed her on the shore, he returned to look for the little peasant, but, alas! it was too late! The poor child had disappeared.

Noémi was so miserable at having caused the death of this generous child, who had given his

life for her, that she fell ill from grief, and for some time her life was in danger. "If I had listened to him," she said, "he would still be living! Why did I not listen to his warning?"

And every time that his mother came to the castle she ran to hide herself, for the grief of this unhappy woman filled her with remorse. She could not bear to look at her face bathed with tears, which seemed to say, "What have you done to my child?"

This story teaches you, dear children, that you may believe implicitly what your parents and teachers say, who never have any motive for deceiving you.

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